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## American Irish Newsletter - April 1991

American Ireland Education Foundation - PEC

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# AMERICAN IRISH NEWSLETTER

AMERICAN Irish Political Education Committee

Volume 16, Number 4

April 1991

## NEWSBITS by Kathy Regan

**MARCH 14** -- As we go to press we learn that the Birmingham Six have been released after spending 17 years in a British prison for offenses they did not commit.... **WASHINGTON** - On March 13 Congressman Eliot Engel (NY) of the Ad Hoc Congressional Committee on Irish Affairs, conducted a congressional inquiry on the case of Sean Mackin. PEC Washington representative Patricia James presented a statement on behalf of the American Irish Political Education Committee in support of Mackin's request for political asylum. (*Copies of the PEC statement are available by sending a self-addressed envelope with postage affixed to the PEC*)...The American Irish PEC has announced the appointment of Dan Warren as PEC State Director for Maine. As a legislator, Dan was active in the Maine MacBride Principles campaign on behalf of the PEC. The MacBride Principles eventually became law...A group of US sailors serving in the Persian Gulf during the war got the opportunity to read about the Irish Hunger Strike and the Irish struggle for self-determination. The consensus of the group was, "once the war with Iraq is over, the US should go to Northern Ireland to drive the British out." Obviously, when fair-minded Americans are informed about Northern Ireland, they will support Ireland's right to be free(AIN-PEC 2/91)...There recently was a one and a half hour debate in the Dail over removing Articles 2 and 3 from the Irish Constitution. "These are the articles which make the north an international problem -- a claim by the state in the south to territory which the British government also claims...during the debate, no mention was made of the British government's responsibility for the mismanagement of the economy or the cruel regime in force since ...continued on page 3

## PEC LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE Saturday, June 29, 1991

We invite all members to take an active/leadership role in building the PEC organization -- to help make our organization bigger and stronger and more effective in promoting our issues.

On June 29, 1991 the American Irish PEC will conduct a one-day Leadership Conference at the Rockland Irish Cultural Center in Blauvelt, New York. The Conference will begin at 8AM and end at 5PM.

The Conference will cover many aspects of our organization, including: its structure, growth and image, grass roots lobbying, development of Support Groups, a Washington, DC office, fundraising, membership recruitment, and public relations.

All members are invited to attend, particularly those already taking active/leadership roles, seeking to take active/leadership roles, or who have special talents and would like to use those talents to better the PEC.

Registration fee will be minimal and will include a PEC Action Guide. Full details and registration form will appear in the May newsletter. Inquiries please call 914 947-2726 days.

## MORE BRITISH DECEIT by Sandy Carlson in Ireland

Dublin-London agreements since Partition, such as the 1975 Sunningdale Agreement and the 1985 Anglo-Irish Agreement, have guaranteed the status quo of Ireland's partition as long as the majority in the North will it. As a result, the unionists see Catholic emigration from Northern Ireland as essential to their control and as the necessary insurance against a united Ireland.

According to Prof. Mike Tomlinson of Queens University, "The British government in the North is now propagating a view which no longer sees unemployment as a problem of the economy, but as a population problem. There are simply too many people in the North for the available jobs, a problem which arises because the birthrate is too high and employment too low." It is to the advantage of the British to ensure that the basic civil right of employment opportunities for Catholics is never fulfilled so that Catholics are squeezed out to survive.

Economist Graham Gudgin has argued that the north could never produce enough jobs to satisfy the employment demands. In the 1990 Northern Ireland Economic Research Center (NIERC) report, "The Northern Ireland Economy: Review and Forecasts to 1995", which Gudgin co-authored, the Center asserts "job creation agencies can't compete with the demand and don't have an immediate impact on unemployment levels (three jobs must be created to take one person off the unemployment count), and besides, there is no hope for dramatic progress in the economy as long as the violence continues."

The British are "now proposing to tackle unemployment firstly through a return to the entrepreneurial spirit that made Northern Ireland one of the business and manufacturing centers of Europe a century ago (Department of Economic Development 1990) and secondly by exporting the surplus population to the European market," according to Tomlinson. Such a training-for-emigration policy would have sectarian implications for Catholics, who are over-represented in low-wage jobs and among the unemployed.

Although emigration is beneficial to the Unionists in power, emigration is damaging to Northern Ireland as a whole. "The effects on those who remain are obvious, if not quantifiable. In economic terms, fewer consumers means fewer jobs, [fewer] houses to build, weaker incentives to help economic development," according to UCD professor Declan Kibert. In addition, the NIERC paper "Planned Migration as Regional Policy" (1990) points out that emigration is what keeps peripheral regions peripheral. Emigration also leads to losses and costs to the exporting sector and subsidies to the importing sector.

A consideration of the political implications of emigration for the Unionist leadership leads to an understanding of the long-flowing stream of ineffectual British Northern Ireland fair employment legislation since 1976 and the British battle against the MacBride Principles. If the disadvantaged working people of Northern Ireland could afford to stay in their own country, they might question, challenge, and eventually dismantle the nepotistic sectarian system designed to create the greatest good for the privileged few.

## FROM THE EDITOR

Throughout American history, there have been factions which sought to disrupt the status quo. In the early 1860's, a group of states decided they did not want to obey the laws of the central government and seceded from the Union. President Lincoln knew he could not allow these people to destroy the country so he stood firm and made it clear that he would not stand for it. His stance resulted in the Civil War, with much suffering on both sides, but, in the end, the country remained united.

The Civil War did not solve all problems; in fact, it created a few which were allowed to fester. One of these was the denial of civil rights to the Black population, an overall minority but still a large number of people. One hundred years later, during the 1960's, this situation culminated in much racial strife as Black people marched for their civil rights and were opposed by many people determined to prevent equal rights from happening. The government decided that equality of civil rights was the right thing and enacted laws to assure it. When the immediate result was bloody anti-civil rights demonstrations, the government could have ignored the law and allowed the status quo to remain "in the interests of peace." Instead, our government stood firm and punished those who defied the law. Ultimately, the violence subsided. Again, in the face of strong government action, a minority dissenting voice was defeated in favor of equal rights.

The problem in Northern Ireland is that the British government will not stand up to the bigots as it is not in the British government's interests to do so. Instead they choose to attempt to crush the civil rights movement.

The British government, in order to resolve this problem, must confront the bigoted Unionist leadership (Orange Order), pass sweeping civil rights legislation, **AND ENFORCE IT**. Peace, justice and stability is the right of all citizens in that region and are much more important than the success of Britain's colonial aggression. If Britain is sincere in its desire to see peace and justice, it has to evenhandedly enforce the laws it has passed and adopt further necessary legislation. There would be a period of dissension (not necessarily violent) but, once people understood that equal employment opportunity and other civil rights were guaranteed by the government to all **and that they meant it**, the unrest would subside. People would learn to co-exist and to work for their **mutual** benefit. The British government must stand up to the vocal, artificial and bigoted majority and declare that peace with justice is the goal for **all** people, even if it means Britain will have to end its colonial occupation of that part of Ireland, even if it means upsetting the status quo for those who run Ireland.

## OFFENSIVE SITUATIONS -- Action Request #2

by Kevin P. Murphy *PEC Massachusetts State Director*

Congratulations to member Eileen Heeb of Orange County, NY for a job well done. Eileen took exception to the use of the term "Paddy" by a local newspaper. She wrote a letter of complaint to the Editor which was printed. As a result, the Editor advised all reporters and headline writers to refrain from referring to St. Patrick's Day as "Paddy's Day".

Massachusetts member Paul Dever has informed the PEC that the Boston based *ADWEEK* magazine, a publication for ad executives, published an article about St. Patrick's Day promotions. The Laurie Peterson article stated that, "The Irish are the only ethnic group left that doesn't take offense at their stereotype as a clan of drinkers." This is an excellent opportunity for all of us to educate another business enterprise. All members are asked to write: Mr. Andrew Jaffe, Editorial Chief, *ADWEEK*, 100 Boylston Street, Boston, MA 02116.

## The American Irish PEC

founded 1975

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Vice-President.....Albert Doyle  
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Supported in part by the Emerald Society, NYC Fire Department.

Sample letter: *Your recent article in Adweek about St. Patrick's Day promotions, by Laurie Peterson, was in error. It stated that, "The Irish are the only ethnic group left that doesn't take offense at their stereotype as a clan of drinkers." Organizations such as the American Irish Political Education Committee (give our address and phone #), through its members, have been effectively combatting such stereotypes...Member Ed O'Donnell of Iowa advises us of a recent editorial cartoon in the Chicago Tribune that was titled, "Irish Scud" and depicted Irish people as bomb tossing madmen. The Scud refers to Iraqi terror missiles. Obviously, the editors failed to note the large percent of American Irish generals and troops who helped win the Gulf War...Florida member Donald Mullaney should be congratulated for bringing to the attention of an import store owner that the term British Isles does not pertain to Ireland, her people or culture...Member Sue Hennessey of California informs us that a protest effort is being continued to protest a large California police association's adoption of the RUC's codes of conduct* SEND ALL OFFENSIVE SITUATIONS TO: Kevin P. Murphy, Box 8895 - J F Kennedy Station, Boston, MA 02114.

**NEWSBITS continued from page 1**

the nineteen twenties. They all put the responsibility on the people for their own misfortunes...During the debate, Mr Bruton, newly appointed leader of Fine Gael sat patiently and signed his Christmas cards - yes, during a debate on the agony of our people he signed Christmas cards...Garret Fitzgerald read a book that day. I could not imagine a greater show of contempt and incompetence than that debate in the Dail" (Andersonstown News, 1/5/91)...**Father Raymond Murray** has lashed out at politicians and clergy who call for independent inquiries into killings when they know that there won't be any such inquiries. "I've heard these demands for inquiries thousands of times and frankly they disgust me. If politicians and clergy are really so concerned, then they should organize their own independent inquiry, invite respected legal people from abroad and publicize their findings throughout the world...Alternatively, they should organize a long-term crusade into such killings to press their demand...They should keep the spotlight on the case no matter how long it takes." (Andersonstown News 1/5/91)

**"We are hearing that most of the claims of the civil rights people in the sixties have been granted by the British government. (1) One vote per person - granted, but as soon as it was granted, the powers of the council for which people were voting were taken away. (2) The powers which the councils had when they were unionist controlled were given to boards which were mainly appointed by the government, not elected by the people...Power and control stayed in the same hands. (3) The pattern of one anti-catholic pogrom every 12 years continues and Catholics are still driven out of areas where they have chosen to live...There are few Catholics left in Peter Robinson's constituency. (4) Catholics are working in the BBC and civil rights service, but, as they will never get to decision and policy making level, anti-Catholic policies and decisions will remain and Catholics will be the administrators of their own persecution ... (5) When it became possible that half the members elected here for Westminster might eventually be non-unionist (6 out of 12), the number of seats was increased to 17. If it becomes possible that 8 or 9 seats could be taken by non-unionists in the future, the number of seats will probably be increased again, thus making it impossible for non-unionists ever to have a majority of available Westminster seats"** (Andersonstown News, 1/19/91)...**Saddam Hussein** was not the first to use chemical weapons against the Iraqi populations. General Sir Aylmer Haldane commanded the British forces which effectively ruled Iraq after its conquest by the Allies during the first world war. When the tribesmen of the Euphrates rose in rebellion against British military rule...in 1920, the British army used gas shells -- "with excellent moral effect" -- in the fighting which followed. (Saskatchewan Star Press 2/3/91)...**There are reports** that the Director of Public Prosecutions (DPP), Allan Green, now accepts that the forensic evidence against the Birmingham Six is unsustainable in court. A spokesman for the relatives says they are "speechless with amazement" that he remains unchanged in his view that the other central plank of evidence against the men - confessions - should be supported. Campaigner Paul May stated, "At the men's original trial, the forensic and confession evidence against them were described as the twin pillars of the case. Is the DPP seriously suggesting that by removing one of those pillars, the other can safely stand? The scientific tests and so-called confessions don't stand up to scrutiny" (Irish Post, 1/12/91)...**A Protestant man** needed some money so he decided to pawn his statue of King Billy. On the way he dropped it and it went to

**GETTING INVOLVED IN THE POLITICAL PROCESS**by Susan Catt, *Arizona State Director*

In 1987 political action was the farthest thing from my mind. I was a working woman living under the impression that ordinary American citizens are not empowered to effect change in our government. When I became a member of the AIPEC and discovered that this organization called on ordinary American citizens to make use of the available modes of political action, such as letter writing, bringing resolutions to the attention of community politicians, etc., I was quite surprised. Making full use of the PEC's suggestions for action, this ordinary American citizen became politically active.

Any individual can lobby his/her interests at any level of government. When lobbying legislators to support our issues relating to British civil and human rights violations in Northern Ireland, e.g. the MacBride Principles, you will also be educating them, as the vast majority of our legislators have very little knowledge of these issues. You can organize groups of people to do the same. Constituent lobbying is very effective. When lobbying, do not lose your composure. If you lobby as a group, by all means, let your best representative be the spokesperson. This will best protect the integrity of the issue, your representation and our organization. Do not be discouraged by negative reactions from legislators. This is all part of lobbying.

The PEC is well respected in legislative government. Our organization, through its democratic processes, is our best tool. We need to promote it and protect it in order to continue success for our interests.

I am sharing these suggestions with our PEC members because of my experiences while lobbying our common interests in a generally conservative state. My convictions overran my fears of microphones, bigwig legislators, illiteracy in journalism, etc. I had no idea until this last year that Senator DeConcini and Senator McCain are human, too, regardless of whether we agree on all issues or not.

Becoming involved and making a difference is a very rewarding experience. By working for our issues, I now find myself precinct committeewoman and Secretary of my county's Democratic Party. I have moved on to be one of my party's state committee persons, with the goal of becoming State Democratic board member within the next two years - all with our interests in clear sight. We need more of us in positions of influence. You can do it too!

Find your effective areas and get to work, from letter writing to lobbying at legislative levels; from making photocopies (if only a few), to making phone calls, to writing letters to the editors of non-Irish as well as Irish publications; from attending workshops, doing radio spots, and becoming a person of political influence through your home government. Always reach one more step beyond. We can always turn back to our comfort zones. Encourage all of the above, as well as forming *PEC Support Groups* and a state directorship, if not already in place. Keep in touch with National Headquarters. PEC staff are extremely knowledgeable and willing to help.

Lastly, some members who are of Irish heritage may feel that they are putting their American interests aside for Irish issues; that American Irish should instead work behind the scenes. This attitude will only keep Irish issues behind the scenes. We know where we stand as individuals on both American issues and Irish issues. Let's allow our government officials, the American public, and the people of colonized Ireland know about our convictions, openly and proudly. Keep your prerogative/priority in clear sight and do not allow yourself to sway from it. **We will succeed.**

## THE ORANGE AND THE GREEN

by Margaret E. Fitzgerald, PH.D.

In the second half of the 18th century severe penal laws against Catholics still existed in Ireland. Some Protestants began to see that when Catholics suffered all Irish interests suffered, and that Protestants shared in the economic ills. Recognizing the common ground between Protestant and Catholic, Protestant nationalists such as Charles Lucas, Henry Flood, Henry Grattan, and Edmund Burke brought the issue of Irish religious and legislative freedom into the political arena and sowed the seeds for demands for independence.

Ireland was legally an independent kingdom, but this was a facade since the British Lord Lieutenant had control over the Irish Parliament -- a Parliament from which Catholics were excluded. Aiming for parliamentary reform through a union of Catholics and Protestants, 26 Presbyterians and 2 Anglicans founded the Society of United Irishmen in Belfast in October 1791. A month later a branch was formed in Dublin. Although the government categorized it as a group of disaffected young Protestants, the Society was successful in recruiting Catholic leaders such as Richard McCormick, William MacNeven, and John Keogh. United Irishman Theobald Wolfe Tone, an Anglican, became paid secretary of the Catholic Committee and said he hoped to "Substitute the common word Irishman in place of the denominations of Protestant, Catholic, and Dissenter." United Irish leaders Samuel Neilson (Presbyterian), Thomas Russell (Quaker), and Henry Joy McCracken (Huguenot) call for equal rights for all religions within an independent Ireland. They were echoed by an honor roll of other Protestant Irish: Lord Edward Fitzgerald, Rev. William Drennan, Arthur O'Connor, Thomas Addis Emmet, James Napper Tandy, A. Hamilton Rowan, Henry Jackson, Henry and John Sheares.

Eventually concluding political reform impossible, the United Irishmen initiated the Rising of 1798 which was savagely suppressed by an England that saw Ireland only as a subservient colony. The Act of Union, effective January 1, 1801, left Ireland worse off than before since she now had no Parliament, not even a tame one. In 1803 the remnants of the United Irishmen rose again under Robert Emmet. Emmet was executed, but he and all his fellow United Irishmen bequeathed to the following generations a heritage of cooperation between Protestant and Catholic.

The next move for freedom was Catholic. Daniel O'Connell and Richard Lalor Sheil reestablished the Catholic Association. O'Connell led the fight for the Emancipation Act of 1829 and founded the Repeal Association in 1840. The Young Irelanders, a movement within the Repeal Association, Young Ireland, attracted both Catholics and Protestants who wanted more than just repeal of the Act of Union. They wanted complete independence, and, like the United Irishmen, approved of physical force when politics failed. The revolution of 1848 did not succeed, but the Young Irelanders showed once again that the Irish could put aside religious differences in the cause of freedom. They left us a legacy of heroes - among the Catholics: Thomas Francis Meagher, Michael Doheny, Thomas D'Arcy McGee, Terence B. McManus, Charles Gavin Duffy, John Blake Dillon; among the Protestants John Mitchel, William Smith O'Brien, John Martin, Thomas Davis, Thomas Clarke Luby.

Luby, son of a Protestant minister and a Catholic mother, survived imprisonment to take a leading part in the Irish Republican Brotherhood and with James Stephens wrote the original Fenian oath and constitution. The Fenians tried to avoid religious labels, but most were devout despite being

denounced and excommunicated by ministers and priests alike. Colonel John O'Neill, who led the Fenian invasion of Canada at Niagara Falls in 1866 was Catholic; General Samuel Spear who invaded from Vermont was Protestant. When captured Fenians were being tried in Toronto, newspapers pointed out that 16 of the 60 prisoners were Protestant, that the prisoners included both a Catholic and a Protestant chaplain, and that the highest leaders, Generals William Roberts and Thomas Sweeny, were Protestants. Protestants were still numbered among the fighters for Irish freedom, despite the growth of the Orange Order.

The Orange Order was founded by Belfast merchants in 1795 to woo away Protestant peasantry from supporting the United Irishmen. The Order began persecuting Catholics in Ulster and in some countries drove them out by burning homes and destroying crops and looms. After the Act of Union, the Orange Order declared itself the defender of Protestant supremacy and the Ascendancy. From then on, whenever there was a threat to English domination, the English would create a diversion by using the Orange Order to set Protestant against Catholic.

Used by and falling into line with England during the 19th century, the Orange Order opposed in turn the repeal of the Act of Union, Catholic Emancipation, recognition of the Catholic hierarchy, the Tenant League, disestablishment of the Church of Ireland, the Land League, and Home Rule. When Gladstone introduced his first Home Rule Bill in 1886, his opponent, Lord Randolph Churchill, with his slogan "Ulster will fight and Ulster will be right", played his Orange Card and brought Protestant upper and middle classes into what had been mostly a lower class Orange Order. However, a few Orangemen had always recognized the British divide-and-conquer technique and had joined ranks with the United Irishmen, the Young Irelanders, the Fenians, and the Land League. In 1902, Thomas Sloan, head of the Belfast Protestant Association, founded the Independent Orange Order which tried to ally its mostly working class members with labor and actually did cooperate with the Ancient Order of Hibernians in Ireland and with James Larkin in a general strike.

However, Protestant leaders continued to oppose any independence, even Home Rule. In 1920 the establishment of the six-county Northern Ireland state deepened antagonisms. Nationalists cannot understand why people whose ancestors have been in Ireland for several hundred years want to see themselves as English. Loyalists cannot understand why their fellow countrymen are not proud to be subjects of the British Empire. Despite insistence by some analysts that the issue is only economic, the fact is that Catholics and Protestants surface on opposite sides of the deep fissure when it comes to Irish nationalism. What Ireland needs are leaders of the vision and stature of Tone, MacNeven, Davis, and Mitchel, who can see that freedom of all Ireland is a patriotic issue separate from religion.

### PEC TO CREATE SPEAKERS BUREAU

The PEC is organizing a Speakers Bureau. The purpose of this is to have available a cadre of public speakers, well versed on British civil and human rights violations in Ireland and fully knowledgeable of the PEC organization and its positions.

Speakers must be willing to address people at public meetings, organizational meetings, colleges and universities, etc. Experience is not necessary. If you would like to become a member of the PEC's Speakers Bureau, please call John Finucane at (914) 947-2726, Monday thru Friday.

# **EASTER 1991: The 75th Anniversary of Ireland's Rebellion Against British Colonialism**

by Sandy Carlson, Reporting from Ireland

"We declare the right of the people of Ireland to the ownership of Ireland, and to the unfettered control of Irish destinies, to be sovereign and indefeasible. The long usurpation of that right by a foreign people and government has not extinguished the right, nor can it ever be extinguished except by the destruction of the Irish people. In every generation the Irish people have asserted their right to national freedom and sovereignty: six times during the past 300 years they have asserted it in arms. Standing on that fundamental right and again asserting it in arms in the face of the world, we hereby proclaim the Irish Republic as a sovereign independent state, and we pledge our lives and the lives of our comrades-in-arms to the cause of its freedom, of its welfare, and of its exaltation among the nations," declared Padraig Pearse from the General Post Office on Easter Monday, 1916.

The rebels of 1916 were drawing on the long standing revolutionary tradition transmitted to them by the Fenian movement, which linked them to the United Irishmen of 1798 and to the Young Irelanders of 1848. Their doctrine of nationality was that of Thomas Davis and Young Ireland: a self-respecting, self-reliant nationality transcending creed, class and ancestry. Fenianism was a physical force movement which repudiated constitutional action, maintaining that self-government for Ireland could be achieved only by force because the British would never willingly grant it through parliamentary action. Fenianism held that common men can feel a political passion for its own sake; its converts were almost entirely from the poor. Its strength lay in the conviction with which its rank and file held its principles rather than in its leadership. Fenianism had a strong appeal because it was clear and steadfast in its aim: separation.

The Parnellite (constitutional) Home Rule movement in the 19th century seemed to have discredited the revolutionary movement until it ended with the ineffectual Home Rule Act of 1914. By then, the revolutionary tradition was thriving and preparations for rebellion were being made.

This revolutionary movement was at the same time greatly influenced by the Irish language movement. The Gaelic League, which began in 1893, developed after the death of Parnell, when a disillusioned people needed a noble cause and found it in the language. Pearse along with other signatories of the Easter Proclamation, was actively involved in the language revival. Sir Roger Casement, a prominent figure in the Rising, stated: "It seems to me impossible to divorce these efforts from the old national tongue . . . If Ireland is to remain Irish in thought, in hopes, in glorious emotions, in all . . . that we are accustomed to associate with our race at its best, then the Irish language must be kept a living tongue." Thus a desire for good government (which could come only through self-government after revolution) along with a desire for a national identity combined to form the impetus of the revolutionary movement.

The Irish Volunteers, part of the force which fought in 1916, was formed in response to Sir Edward Carson's forming the Ulster Volunteer Force to frustrate the British Labor government's plan to introduce Home Rule. The Irish Volunteers was meant to be a broad-based movement including John Redmond's parliamentary party, Arthur Griffith's Sinn Fein, and unaffiliated groups. However, Pearse objected to sharing power with the constitutionalist Home Rule supporters led by John Redmond, saying: "The leaders in Ireland have nearly always left the people at the critical moment; they have sometimes sold them. The

former Volunteer movement was abandoned by its leaders, O'Connell recoiled from the cannon at Clontarf; twice the hour of the Irish revolution struck during Young Ireland days and twice it struck in vain . . . Stephens refused to give the word in '65; he never came in '66 or '67 . . ." Pearse knew that there would be neither gifts from nor negotiations with the British; good government through self-government would have to be taken by force.

The Volunteers split after Redmond's 1914 speech recruiting Irishmen to Britain's World War I effort. When Casement, who was fundraising in the U.S. . . . heard of Redmond's efforts, he sent an "Open Letter to the Irish People," in which he said: "Ireland has suffered at the hands of British administrators a more prolonged series of evils, deliberately inflicted, than any other community of civilized men. Today, when no margin of vital strength remains for vital tasks at home, when its fertile fields are reduced by set design to producing animals and not men, the remnant of our people are being urged to lay down their lives on foreign fields, in order that great and inordinately wealthy communities may grow greater and richer by the destruction of a rival's trade and industry." Thus, the fundamental question of whether to fight for or against Ireland's oppressor severed the link between constitutional nationalism and revolutionary nationalism.

The Easter Rising was based on two assumptions: 1. The mass of Volunteers would respond to the call to arms; and 2. If the Rising could hold its own for a week or two, the mass of Irishmen would be inspired by a national instinct to respond. Even in defeat, the Rising would revive the national aspiration to republican independence.

When nothing happened on Easter Sunday, due to Eoin MacNeill's public order countermanning orders for Easter Sunday, the architects of the Rising decided to stage an impromptu revolt on the following day. Dublin Castle did not expect a rising because it believed it had the Irish situation well in hand. Undersecretary Nathan and his colleagues believed there could not be an insurrection, since on 21 April Roger Casement had been captured after landing German weapons in Kerry. Nathan believed that the rebel leaders must have been dismayed and therefore unwilling to revolt. As a result, they concentrated their efforts on the details of the arrests and disarming of the Volunteers. Besides, throughout this year, Ireland was in a state of great economic prosperity; the British government in Dublin simply assumed if the economy was good, the people would be still. That there was a rebellion in spite of this relative prosperity placed Dublin Castle in the awkward position of being unable to dismiss the rebellion as a result of economic discontent only. Because the British did not consider that the underlying dissatisfaction which led to the revolution could have stemmed from the nature of the authority itself, they were altogether surprised when, a few minutes after noon on Easter Monday 1916 (after Pearse read the Proclamation), the Castle was attacked.

Few people paid attention to Pearse's proclamation, and few people stopped to notice the 850 armed and uniformed Volunteers and Citizens Army dispersing all over Dublin. Rumors spread that the Germans had landed, that the Turks had landed, that Jim Larkin had landed with 50,000 Irish Americans. Every possibility was considered - except the fact that fewer than 900 ordinary men with minimal military training, outnumbered 20 to 1, had challenged an empire to secure the people's right to independence.

The first assumption on which the Rising was based was fulfilled: the numbers rose to 2,000 Volunteers, 200 Citizens Army, 50 Hibernian Rifles. There was activity in Galway, County Dublin, and Wexford. Soldiers came from other parts of Ireland

**Continued next page**



as well as from among the Irish in the British Army in France.

The fighting continued until 29 April, when the Provisional Government decided to surrender, which went into effect that day. The British government in Dublin responded by placing Dublin and then all of Ireland under martial law. British Prime Minister Asquith put the rebellion down to unsatisfactory economic conditions in parts of Dublin. In conjunction with excusing the rebels by blaming the economy, the British stepped up their efforts to criminalize the revolutionaries by identifying them with Sinn Fein, the subject of previous British criminalization efforts. This criminalization policy had actually begun after 1905, when Dublin Castle began dubbing all Irish-Irelanders "Sinn Fein." The British found Arthur Griffith's Sinn Fein (many of whose members came from the Gaelic League) contentious. When Griffith drafted Sinn Fein's doctrines, he called for the fostering and protection of home industries, the investment of Irish savings in Ireland, and the development of shipping and waterways throughout Ireland. This self-reliance and self-sufficiency doctrine displeased the colonial rulers of Ireland. By identifying the rebellion with Sinn Fein, the authorities were able to arrest everybody who had ever been prominent in that party. This policy had the advantage, also, of saving the British authorities from having to admit that the "Fenians" had come to life in sufficient strength to put up the mightiest fight for Ireland since 1798.

After the Rising, Carson said in Parliament: "Sinn Feiners . . . ought to be put down with courage and determination, and with an example which would prevent a revival . . ." This member of the Orange Order and founder of the UVF clearly felt threatened by Sinn Fein's separatist ideal.

While the British authorities in Dublin obviously opposed the revolution from the start, public opinion was divided at first. At a public meeting in Galway on 26 April, the people of Galway were called upon to support the Crown, on the advice of John Redmond. Redmond's followers also opposed the Rising. The English Labor movement stood with the pro-Home Rule Redmondites. Not until the British executed the leaders of the Rising did support for the Rising grow. Indeed, the Irish Volunteers never received support from any influential persons from its inception up to the Rebellion. Roger Casement noted: "In Ireland alone in the twentieth century is loyalty held to be a crime."

The executions shocked Ireland and the world. On 10 May, the Manchester Guardian called for an end to the shootings. Even the New York Times called the executions "incredible stupidity." The executions turned anger into numbed shock and into opposition to the British. Said one woman who witnessed the Rising, "The executions which now followed swiftly heightened my resolve. As soon as I could, I joined the local branch of Sinn Fein, where I found people already flocking to it." The second assumption on which the Rising was based was thus fulfilled.

The leaders of the Rising saw their effort as a beginning to which "the generous high-bred youth of Ireland will never fail to answer the call we pass on - will never fail to blaze forth in the red rage of war to win their country's freedom," according to Thomas MacDonagh. Pearse, addressing the president of his court martial, said, "... we seem to have lost, but we have not lost. To refuse to fight would have been to lose, to fight is to win; we have kept faith with the past and handed on a tradition to the future.

"If you strike us down now we shall rise again and renew the fight; you cannot conquer Ireland, you cannot extinguish the Irish passion for freedom. If our deed has not been sufficient to win freedom, then our children will win it by a better deed."

So began the revolution which has yet to be finished because Ireland is still economically and politically fettered to Britain.

The Irish national struggle arose from the consequences of an

economy crippled by Britain's parasitic landlordism. Ireland's economic dependence on Britain has remained much the same throughout the twentieth century. In 1965, 40% of all new firms established in Ireland were British controlled. By 1971, 60% of the total profits of publicly-quoted companies in the South were going to Britain. By 1971, 55% of the South's imports came from Britain and 66% of its exports were going there.

As the rebels of 1916 and their forerunners knew, Irish economic dependence on Britain would manacle Irish independence and sovereignty to the Crown for as long as it continued. Likewise, the British were and have always been aware of this. Hence, the British knew in 1916 and know now that destroying the Spirit of 1916 plays an essential part in their own prosperity. Lord Glentoran (former Northern Minister of Commerce) analyzed the significance of the change of Taoiseach from Eamon de Valera to Sean Lemass in 1960: "Our economic and social relations with the Republic are probably closer than with any other country . . . (A) depression there must affect our own prosperity. It would, therefore, be desirable to try, if we can, to find some way to help their economy . . . (The) political atmosphere of the South is changing. This metamorphosis will be neither rapid nor dramatic. But there have already been signs that the Dublin government is anxious to move away from the negative attitudes of earlier administrations. The Spirit of 1916 and 1922 is on the wane." More than forty years after the Rising, the British had yet to understand that economic health was not the sole interest of the nationalist movement.

The process of corroding the Spirit of 1916 has gained ground in the Workers Party and Fine Gael in the South as they argue to remove Articles 2 and 3 of the Constitution, which state that Ireland's national territory consists of the "whole island of Ireland" and that "pending the reintegration of the national territory," the laws of the Republic will apply to that territory.

Ireland's sovereignty over the island of Ireland has been further manipulated by the Anglo-Irish Agreement of 1985, for it recognized only Ireland's "consultative" role in the governing the North. Thus, it is a sell-out of the nationalist people of Ireland. However, because the agreement recognizes that consultative role, the unionists of the North likewise feel sold out. This has resulted in game playing: by insisting that Dublin comes into talks over the Agreement only after the unionists have been talking with London, the unionists hope to achieve Dublin's de facto recognition of partition. Dublin has been far less than assertive regarding its right to be present from the beginning.

Although British efforts to destroy the Spirit of 1916 have gained ground in Dublin, the same efforts have not been so successful in the part of Ireland where British control of the island is most obvious: the Six Counties. There the spirit of Clarke, Pearse, Plunkett, Ceannt, MacDonagh, Connolly, and MacDiarmada and the beginning they forged continue against the pro-British conciliatory "Redmondite" spirit of John Hume, his SDLP, and Dublin. As in 1916, this spirit lives in spite of Britain's massive military efforts and criminalization efforts against the nationalist people.

In the Republic, the spirit of 1916 is but a whisper in the wind; the Dublin government's activity to commemorate the 1916 Rising consists solely in issuing a commemorative postage stamp. Representatives of the post office do not yet know when the stamp will be issued. At a grassroots level, commemorations were organized by the communities for the communities because the pro-British Dublin government lacks the moral courage to celebrate its founding for fear of displeasing the British.

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**MACBRIDE PRINCIPLES UPDATE**by Tom O'Flaherty *National MacBride Principles Consultant*

The American MacBride campaign 1991 is now off and running with the start of the current legislative sessions in all states that will be considering bills. Fourteen states will be acting on some form of legislation this year. MacBride ordinances and resolutions will also be presented to a number of municipal boards for action.

**OHIO** -- State Director Kathy Whitford has informed us that a bill will be reintroduced to the House and Senate this year. Kathy stresses that the help of all PEC members in Ohio is needed. She can be reached at (216) 529-0670; her address appears in the PEC organization box on page two. **WASHINGTON** -- State Director Andy Kelly (phone# (509) 747-7431) and Seattle representatives Marianne Blumhoff (206) 248-7592) and Rita Hagwell (206) 779-2242) advise us that on January 28 Rep. Dennis Dellwo submitted a MacBride bill (HB 1407) to the State House, and on February 13 which was approved by the State Government Committee 9 - 1, Dellwo's bill still has another hearing in the House. State Senator James West introduced legislation to the State Senate. On February 25 Marianne Blumhoff, Rita Hagwell and other members of the **Americans For MacBride**, including former Belfast residents Kay and Rory McKenna, testified on behalf of the legislation. The group has been actively lobbying their legislators and organizations soliciting support for the bill. They also won support from a major Latin American immigrant organization *Committee In Defense Of Immigrant Rights*. All **Washington State** members are urged to help in this campaign by contacting Andy, Rita or Marianne (phone numbers above)

and by contacting the office of their state senators and representatives at 800 562-6000. Leave a message asking your representative to support HB 1407 -- your senator to support SB 5649. **CALIFORNIA** -- PEC MacBride Coordinator Mary O'Donnell advises that the California MacBride Committee held a meeting in San Francisco recently where State Representative John Burton announced his re-introduction of legislation in California. His last effort on behalf of MacBride passed overwhelmingly in both houses only to be vetoed by the Governor. Mr. Burton is a champion of the effort in the California Legislature. At this meeting Tom O'Flaherty had a slide presentation and discussed the current status of the campaign in the US. All members in California are urged to support this effort. For information call Mary O'Donnell (415) 641-8178. Mary has also started a PEC Support Group which is presently concentrating its efforts on the California State MacBride Principles campaign.

Joe Jameson, director of the Irish American Labor Coalition, has advised the PEC that the New England Health Care Employees Pension fund has adopted the MacBride Principles affecting \$60 million dollars in investments. The IALC has opened a new door for MacBride activity through this action. Union pension funds are a good place for MacBride Principles because they are private funds and the British government has a hard time lobbying against them. If you would like further information on how your union can take similar action, contact Joe Jameson, Irish American Labor Coalition, 48 E 21 Street, New York, NY 10010 -- phone# (212) 777-6040.

(Ed. Note: Members interested in initiating any kind of MacBride Principles action can contact Tom O'Flaherty at (603) 528-5733.)

**IRISH HUNGER STRIKE COMMEMORATION**

You are cordially invited by the families of the ten, young Irish men who died on hunger strike for Ireland to a historic weekend of events to honor their sacrifice.

**1981 HUNGER STRIKE TESTIMONIAL BANQUET**

Saturday, May 4 (8:30 pm to 1 am)

**REPRODUCE &  
DISTRIBUTE****Guests of Honor: The Families of the Hunger Strikers****Special Guests: Mickey Rourke (and friends)**

Please join the family members of the ten hunger strikers aboard the World Yacht in New York Harbor for a Benefit for the 1981 Memorial Foundation (*a monument and scholarship fund in memory of the hunger strikers*) and to launch the production of an upcoming film about the Hunger Strike that shook Ireland and the world ten years ago. A major announcement about this film project will be made on board. Tickets \$100 ea -- includes Music, Dancing, Food, Cruise around Ellis Island, Open Bar. Tickets must be purchased in advance.

A TESTIMONIAL JOURNAL will also be published -- Gold Page \$300, Silver Page \$200, Full Page \$100, 1/2 Page \$60, 1/4 Page \$30, Booster \$20.

Sunday, May 5 3:00 pm : **MASS AT ST. PATRICK'S CATHEDRAL**  
**Celebrant: Fr. Brian McCreesh, brother of Raymond McCreesh**

Sunday, May 5 5:00 pm: **MEMORIAL COMMEMORATION AT THE UNITED NATIONS**

**FOR RESERVATIONS AND TO PURCHASE JOURNAL ADS:** Make checks payable to 1981 Memorial Fund and mail to: American Irish Political Education Committee (PEC). For further information call 800 777-6807, 9 am to 5 pm, monday through saturday.



## ACTION REQUEST #1 -- MacBride Legislation

In early 1990 we began a letter-writing/postcard campaign to House Speaker Thomas Foley and Senate Majority Leader George Mitchell. This campaign is designed to build pressure in support of federal MacBride Principles bills introduced by Congressman Hamilton Fish (R-NY) and Senators Frank Lautenberg (D-NJ) and Al D'Amato (R-NY). We continue this campaign.

**ALL MEMBERS** are asked to write and/or call Honorable Dante Fascell, Chairman, Committee on Foreign Affairs (phone# 202 225-4506), and Honorable Lee Hamilton, Chairman, Subcommittee on Europe and the Middle East (phone# 202 225-5315). Both have the same address which is: House of Representatives, Washington, DC 20515. If you choose to call, be polite and be sure to give your message to the first person you talk to, to assure that your message is received. Also, have your family, friends, business associates, etc. call or write.

For your convenience we provide the sample letter below. Use our letter as a guide, or simply rewrite it as is.

Dear \_\_\_\_\_:

I respectfully request that you conduct hearings on the Northern Ireland Fair Employment Practices Act introduced by Congressman Hamilton Fish. Discrimination in employment is a major cause of violence in Northern Ireland.

I look forward to your response on this urgent matter.

Sincerely,  
signature

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**Membership includes a one-year subscription to our monthly Newsletter.**

## THE PEC SUPPORT GROUP: A PRIORITY

The *PEC Support Group* is the future of the PEC. The PEC has built a national network and must now expand its effectiveness by promoting more activity at the community (local) level. At the local level, we must strive to recruit new members, to educate the public, to get more people involved in letter writing, and in raising funds for the PEC. The best way to achieve this is through the Support Group. We appeal to our active minded members to form Support Groups in their communities. All members, whether involved in a Support Group or not, can implement these activities. We respect and depend on all members, whether active or not.

The PEC itself began as a "support group" consisting of four ordinary people. Through trial and error, it has grown to be a national organization with thousands of members. Its success is the result of determination and sacrifice on the part of its members. They never gave up! This is exactly what we are asking our members to do -- to emulate the original PEC. All Support Groups are an integral part of the national PEC.

Support Groups will vary from groups that meet only to write letters, which is required of all groups, to groups that set up information tables, conduct membership drives and fundraisers, organize public and private educational forums, etc.

The PEC Support Group is explained in the February 1991 newsletter issue. We will send you a copy upon request.

Play a leading role in building the PEC -- in making an issue of our issues, **join or organize a PEC Support Group**. For information contact the national PEC at (914) 947-2726/Malloy Building, Stony Point, NY 10980.

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